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FARMING TO MEET THE DEFENSE CHALLENGE - NO. 1

A broadcast Tuesday, June 10, 1941 by 16 AAA State Committeemen in the Department of Agriculture portion of the National Farm and Home Hour. First in a series of three in which reports from all 48 States were presented by Committeemen attending National AAA Conference in Washington, D. C.

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KADDERLY:

Here we are in Washington, where farmers from every State in the Union are meeting this week. They have come together at the Department of Agriculture to prepare the Triple-A Farm Program for 1942. Like everybody else, they are directing their attention toward national preparedness and aid to democracies.

These farmer-committeemen who administer the Triple-A program in the States are in position to see perhaps better than anyone else what farmers can do and are doing to defend this Nation and to make it the larder for democracy. Today, tomorrow, and Thursday, those men will report to you as representatives of the farmers in their States.

They will tell how producers are farming to meet the defense challenge.

We begin with a State where defense industries, army camps, shipments across the sea, and farming are all tied up together. Here's Ralph Y. DeWolfe with a report from New York.

DeWOLFE:

The farmers of New York State are making it their particular business to help keep the health of factory workers at a high peak by supplying vitamin-rich foods. Of equal importance is the responsibility of New York farmers to men in the camps located throughout the State. We have been using the Triple-A conservation program to build up our soil. Now we are using the strength and vitality of the soil to produce the milk, eggs, poultry, fresh vegetables, canning crops, and fruits needed by England, by the other nations fighting aggression, by our own defense workers and our soldiers.

KADDERLY:

From Georgia comes further recognition of the connection between health, defense, and farming. We hear Robie Gray.

GRAY:

We folks down in Georgia feel that the soil -- adequate pastures and land for health-giving food and feed -- is the soul of our defense. Sick soil means sick people, ill-equipped for defense of that soil.

We realized long ago that our land was sick. We began putting it to bed, in relays, and doctoring it with the medicines prescribed by

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the Triple-A conservation. From 1938 through 1940, phosphate applications were increased nearly 900 percent, and liming was boosted more than 1800 percent. This year we expect to do even more.

Georgia farmers are aiming for healthier soil, better health, and stronger bodies. Through these, we'll be better prepared for what lies ahead.

KADDERLY:

From the Southeast, across the continent to the Northwest -- to Washington where milk and wheat are the two most important crops. I present W. A. Wolf.

WOLF:

Right now when the country needs more milk and less wheat, we're mighty glad we've got a flexible farm program. Quotas, allotments, and loans are helping us take care of our great wheat supplies...and conservation practices help us to step up dairy production.

Our seedings of legumes and grasses give us a dependable supply of pasture and hay. The use of superphosphate on these crops is important too. Our dairymen have increased their use of this valuable fertilizer many times over, and already this year the Triple-A has distributed more than 10 thousand tons in place of cash payments.

KADDERLY:

Next we hear from Guy W. Smith, representing another State from which we expect great production of food for defense. The State of Iowa.

SMITH:

Iowa farmers are increasing the production of all commodities needed in the food for defense program. But Iowa's contribution will be greatest through pork production.

Farmers are planning for a definite increase in fall pig farrowings, and at the present time they are feeding hogs to heavier weights. Iowa has more than 250 million bushels of corn stored in the Ever-Normal Granary. We are converting this corn into pork and other needed foods.

Iowa farmers are doing and will continue to do their part in national defense.

KADDERLY:

I know we can all count on that, not only in Iowa but in every State. Our next report comes from Maryland, represented by H. H. Nuttle.

NUTTLE:

Maryland farmers plant approximately 25 percent of the nation's tomato acreage. And because of the food for defense program, it looks as if our acreage will be 10 percent higher this year than last year.

Growers are using improved cultural methods, and we expect to raise all the tomatoes that the canners can use during the entire canning season. Maryland farmers are also going forward with plans to grow more of the food needed at home on the farm.

KADDERLY:

Texas underscores the importance of more food for home use. Giving the report from the Lone Star State is George Slaughter.

SLAUGHTER:

We're going "all out" down in Texas to see that America has ample supplies of food. And to produce the necessary food, the farm families themselves must have plenty of the right things to eat. One step in the right direction is for all farmers to produce their own vegetables on their farms.

In cooperation with the Triple-A program last year, Texas farmers planted 150,000 gardens to supply their families with food. That food means better health. This year Texas farmers are planting a lot more gardens and will produce more food than ever before.

KADDERLY:

American farms have a tremendous productive capacity. And we hear next about one type of work which is maintaining and building up this capacity. We call on William Enschede of Oregon.

ENSCHUDE:

In Oregon last year we grew and shipped enough seed of Austrian winter field peas, hairy vetch, and rye grass to make 7 trains of 100 cars a train. This is especially important now that our trade with Europe has been disrupted because practically all of the seed of these cover crops used to come from Central Europe. Nowadays, as a part of the farm program, Oregon farmers grow the seed and Southern farmers plant it. The cover crops preserve and help build up the fertility of the soil.

KADDERLY:

Farmers are meeting the defense challenge in many ways -- from the Pacific State of Oregon to the Atlantic State of New Jersey. Representing New Jersey, here's "Chuck" Bernhard speaking for Charles A. Collins.

BERNHARD:

In New Jersey farmers are working longer hours. Due to the expansion of war industries in our State, farmers have lost a large number of their laborers. However, our State is one that produces a large supply of the protective foods such as milk, eggs, vegetables, and fruit. We are paying particular attention to the need for tomatoes, eggs, and dairy products. We have a contribution to make to better nutrition and health of all our people, and that job is worth the longer hours.

KADDERLY:

And that's the spirit that will do the job. Now we hear from the wheat and livestock State of Kansas. Roy C. Wilson.

WILSON:

In Kansas our job is to expand the production of livestock products and to hold down wheat production. As the need for wheat production has fallen off, Kansas farmers have reduced their wheat seedings more than 4 million acres in the past two years. With less land in wheat, we are producing more livestock products. Under the Triple-A program, we have been seeding more land to legumes, grasses and supplemental pasture crops. We have been storing more feed crops and conserving the grass lands. As our contribution to national defense, we are concentrating on these efforts to stimulate livestock production.

KADDERLY:

And that's what I'd call true agricultural adjustment -- adjustment to the needs of the nation. Now we hear again from the Far West, as Dave Davidson speaks for California.

DAVIDSON:

Several of the reports we have heard emphasized the fact that we must have good soil in order to meet the requirements of preparedness. And California farmers agree fully. In severe storms during the rainy season last winter, we got twice our normal rainfall -- and an expensive lesson in soil erosion. California farmers have become more truly conservation conscious in recent months than ever before. We don't want to repeat the soil erosion experience of last winter, and farmers are adopting practices to prevent it.

KADDERLY:

Yes, we must save the soil, for the way of life we're defending looks toward a long future of abundance and opportunity. And besides, there's an immediate gain from good soil management, as we find in West Virginia, the State represented now by Hu S. Vandervort.

VANDERVORT:

The immediate gain from conservation is better nutrition. By seeding legumes, and plowing under green manure crops, we're restoring to the soil some of the minerals and other essentials for adequate nourishment of animal and human bodies. Cows feeding on poor soils produce milk that's poor in some of the valuable minerals. Cows fed on a good grade of alfalfa hay produce milk with about five times as much vitamin A as do cows fed on a poor grade of timothy hay.

West Virginia farmers are contributing to national health defense by building up and conserving the fertility of their soil.

KADDERLY:

These reports are like the floats in a parade -- the procession moves steadily along and every glimpse is an eyeful. Here's one now labeled Missouri. The man is C. W. Sheppard.

SHEPPARD:

Missouri farmers show they are overwhelmingly in favor of the lend-lease act for aid to Britain. We recognize our part is to supply the foods that are needed. Reports from a cross-section of the State indicate an

increase of 30 percent in the number of sows bred for fall farrowing, above last year. Hatcheries are overflowing with orders for baby chicks, and the largest hatch on record is indicated.

Missouri is known as the "show-me" State, and we farmers plan to show the nation that in cooperation with other States we can supply the needs of America and Great Britain.

KADDERLY:

Once again we hear from the East. A report from Rhode Island by Oscar R. Hallene.

HALLENE:

As others have pointed out, conservation of the soil is a major defense item, and we are maintaining or even gaining in this field.

However, there's something else I want to tell you about. In our State, poultry and dairy products are of major importance. To produce them, we must have a reliable supply of grain. The agricultural conservation committeemen of Rhode Island have made a survey of grain storage space. This helps prepare us for any emergency that would make it advisable to utilize the full capacity of storage. We want to keep in a position always to meet the defense challenge.

KADDERLY:

Now...R. C. Branch, to tell us how the farmers of Arkansas are meeting the defense challenge.

BRANCH:

Farmers of Arkansas are cooperating wholeheartedly with the Department of Agriculture in the food for defense plan. In the northwest part of the State, farmers are expanding the tomato acreage and the production of dairy products, poultry and eggs. In all sections of the State, farmers are cooperating in the food production program by growing their own food and feed at home and producing a little extra for other people. In most of the State, farmers have been cooperating in efforts to reduce the cotton surplus by signing intentions to participate in the supplementary cotton program. These are some of the ways in which we're meeting the defense challenge on the farm front.

KADDERLY:

There are many sectors on the farm front, as these reports indicate. William J. Scherm of Kentucky reports on another sector.

SCHERM:

Kentucky farmers used "brakes" last fall when we voted three-year quotas on our biggest cash crop -- tobacco. But we recognized then that a farm program needs "pick-up" power as well as "brakes." So in January we had a State-wide meeting of more than a thousand farmer-committeemen to get ready for whatever problems might come up in our defense of democracy.

When Secretary Wickard announced the new food program, these Triple-A "minute-men" were ready to go. In cooperation with the Extension Service

they have helped to assure a 150 to 200 percent increase in tomatoes for canning in Kentucky. We're organized to use our productive capacity... whenever and however it's needed.

KADDERLY:

Next, and last for today....Walter F. Katterhenry speaking for Wisconsin.

KATTERHENRY:

In Wisconsin we're maintaining record high levels of milk production. We've moved up to near the top of the list in production of sweet corn for canning. Our state is among the leaders in production of peas, and this year, we've used all the available seed. Our farmers have greatly increased their baby chick numbers. Dairy products, sweet corn, peas, baby chicks...that's only part of the story. Not to be forgotten is the spirit of our farmers...the spirit of "On Wisconsin...we'll do our share, and more if need be, for national defense."

KADDERLY:

"Our share, and more if need be." ... It seems to me that's the tons of all these reports to the Nation from all parts of the Nation. Converting abundant feed supplies into food, adjusting production from less-needed to more-needed crops, taking care of feed storage problems, and fortifying the soil so as to produce the quantity and the quality of food required for good nutrition...in all these ways. American farmers are meeting the defense challenge.

Tomorrow another group of farmer-committeemen attending the National Triple-A Conference in Washington will bring you their reports.

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